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Comfort meets conservation

by Mark Anderson - 4.24.07 Hotel luxury and energy conservation are not

Leadership in Energy and Environmental

the odd couple they once were — especially in the Northwest, where sustainability is increasingly considered a must. Nowadays, the U.S. Green Building Council's

Design (LEED) rating system, Green Seal certification and Energy Star partnerships are among the well-respected tools with which hotels can reduce energy use and market themselves as environmental stewards. "It comes back to the ability of hotels to demonstrate a plan for reducing the environmental footprint," says Brian Kealoha of

Energy Industries, a Hawaii-based energy project developer with several West Coast offices. "Five years ago, saving energy might have been considered cheap. Now a lot of guests factor it into their decision making, particularly in the Northwest." Water heating, space heating and lighting account for 77 percent of the nearly \$4 billion

the hotel industry spends on energy each year, according to the Alliance to Save Energy, a nonprofit coalition of business, government, environmental and consumer leaders based in Washington, D.C. "There's wear and tear on hotels, so there's constant opportunity to remodel and upgrade."

says Regina Hauser, executive director of

Oregon Natural Step Network, a membership

organization advocating sustainability. "That means there are lots of things they can control, and energy efficiency is often the low-hanging fruit." Kealoha rattles off some easy pickings — using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), low-flow showerheads, controllable thermostats

and solar water heating, and washing clothes in cold water with newfangled ozone-additive

systems — that pay for themselves.

Downtown Portland's 782-room Hilton saves \$1,600 per month on electricity since changing to CFLs, according to Mike McLeod, director of sales and marketing at the hotel, which is certified by Green Seal, a nonprofit which has developed science-based environmental certification standards for over 35 product categories. Rooms are equipped with miserly showerheads and will have motion-triggered thermostats before year's end, McLeod says.

"People are pretty receptive to it all," McLeod says. "They aren't walking into dark hallways, and the new showerheads put out a better jet with less water. We're not doing things that would hurt the guest experience."

Downtown Portland's venerable Heathman Hotel, working toward Energy Star certification, is upgrading its heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, which should cut energy expenses by 20 to 30 percent.

Working behind the scenes is David Lee of Viking Energy Services, a Portland-based

consultant who says that the 1927 building underwent total renovation in the mid-1980s, when the best HVAC system available was added. "Hotel people usually put money into paint and

carpet and fixtures," says Lee. "They don't pay that much attention to things in the background. So it's a matter of them bringing their system up to 2007 with all the computer advances that have trickled down to HVAC." Portland's Lloyd Center Doubletree, the first

Oregon hotel to achieve Green Seal certification, employs a carbon calculator. Located in the hotel lobby, it allows guests to plug travel information into a Web site and come up with an amount, at \$12 per metric ton, which offsets the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of their trip. "We can pin down a very accurate assessment

of how many metric tons of carbon are

generated from a guest's travel," says Michael Luehrs, the 476-room hotel's director of operations. "They pay a dollar amount usually between \$10 and \$30 — and it gets invested directly into reducing CO2 emissions." The hotel in April won a BEST award from the City of Portland's Office of Sustainable

Development for its energy and water efficiency improvements, its food composting program and for educating its customers about how they can reduce their environmental footprint. In Northern California, smaller hotels can take advantage of Honeywell's Cool Control Plus

program, which installs energy-management systems into guest rooms free of charge. The cost is picked up by San Francisco-based Pacific Gas & Electric, which is required to fund energy conservation programs. Honeywell's VendingMiser, an energy-saving plug-and-play device, can be used in hotel vending machines to reduce the energy consumption of existing "These are the moms and pops where the families live in the hotels in many cases," says Honeywell's Wendy Brummer, the project's

manager. "The device is large and ugly and looks like a smoke detector, but it has great range. This program is something we hope to roll out throughout the rest of the country and offer to other utilities. We're installing our hearts out." Another route hotels can take to save energy is by starting from scratch, a tack taken by the

summer 2007 could become the world's only hotel to hold both Green Seal and LEED certification. The building is 30 percent more energy-efficient than city code requires, and its green measures include CO2 sensors that adjust the temperature in vacant meeting

Hilton in Vancouver, Wash. — which by

rooms and hallways, and a heat-reflecting roof. Commissioning and studies added \$125,000 to the price of the 2005 project, according to Dale Farr of Fletcher Farr Ayotte, the building's architect. "We had to sell the idea to Hilton," Farr says. "But after they saw the things it would do as

far as savings and positive publicity, they decided to go ahead." The measures installed at the Hilton were "very aggressive," says Michelle Missfeldt, key

accounts manager at Clark Public Utilities. "The eventual payback is short. It sets a standard for other facilities like theirs." Even the food and furniture come from nearby.

"It's not going on a ship and a train and a

truck," says Gerry Link, the 226-room hotel's general manager. "It comes from Oregon. That saves energy too. "Going green doesn't mean giving up luxury,"

Link says. "Of course, if you have a bad night's stay and can't get hot water to take a shower,

you're not going to come back. A bad meal is a bad meal. Blending hospitality and sustainability is the key element."



Portland's Lloyd Center Doubletree won a 2007 BEST Award from the City of Portland.

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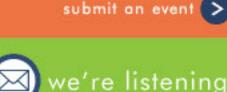
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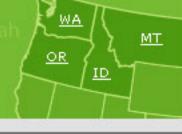






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